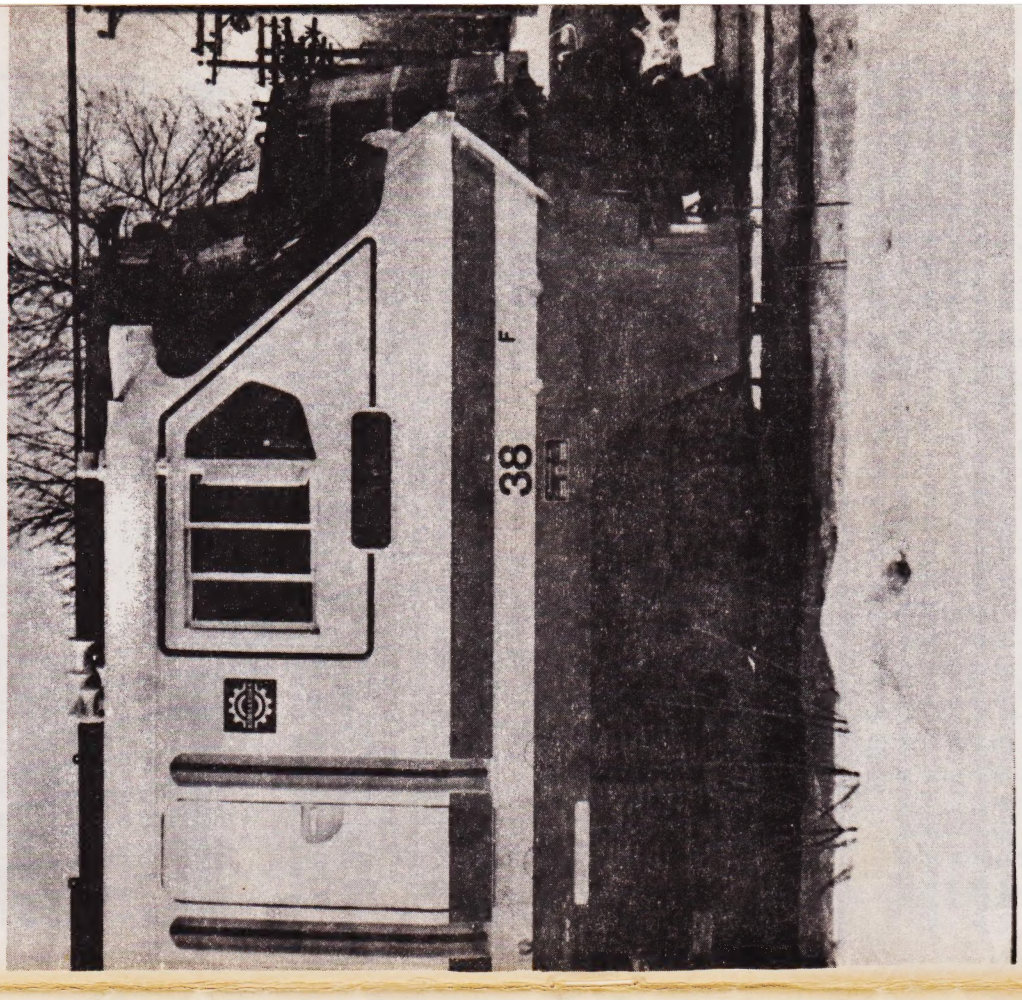
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL.10 NO.5
MARCH 1980
ISSUE NO. 202

65¢

Reid. 4-12-80



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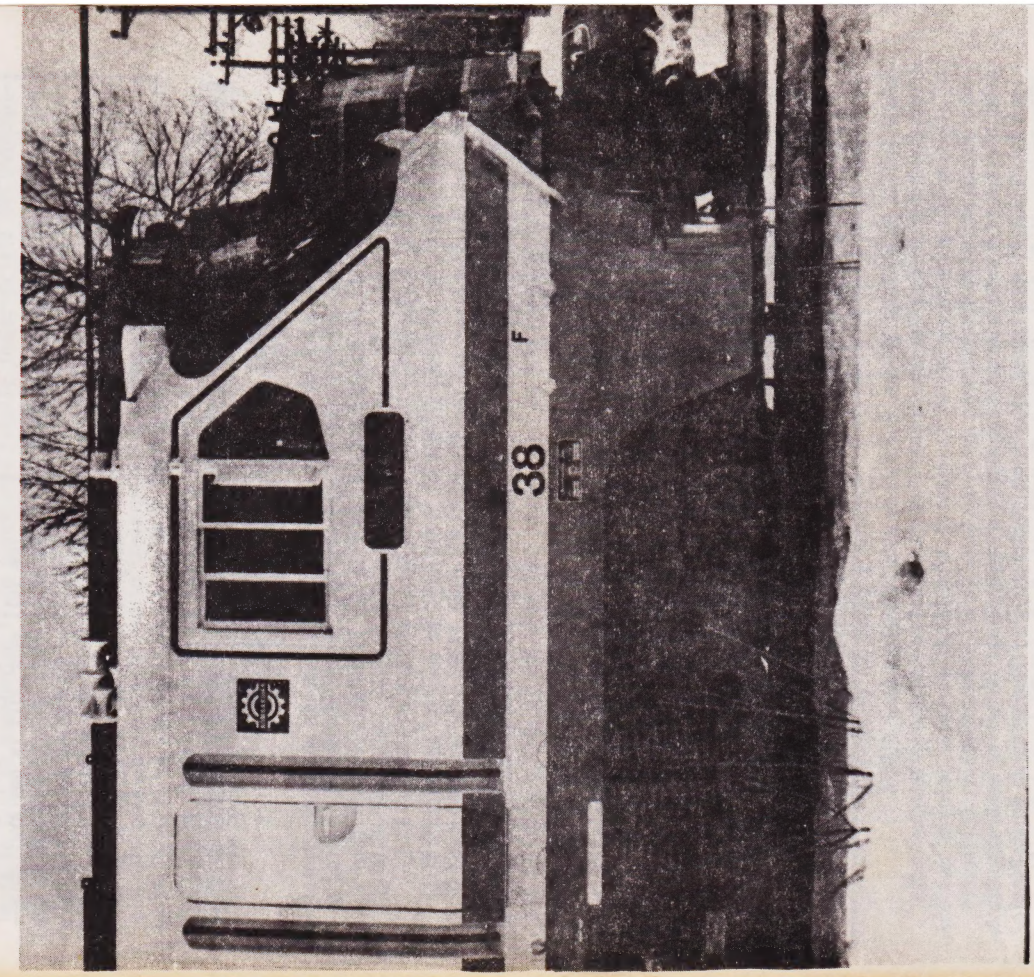

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BACK ISSUES

The full year 1979 is now available--Volume 9, 15 issues of RTN all in one parcel for just $5.50 postpd, no tax. Also: 1978 $5.50; 1977 (22 issues) $7. RTN, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

THE COVER STORY

The new LRC train built for Amtrak by Bombardier of Canada undergoes compatibility tests with Amtrak F40 diesel locomotive no. 211 at St-Lambert, Quebec on Feb 28. Engine 211 sits behind LRC no. 38. In our last issue we published a different view of this LRC just out of the Canadian factory. Amcoach 21819 was also used in the compatibility tests. LRC coaches 41, 42, 43, 44 and 46 are completed also. The lightweight diesel train will be used by Amtrak initially on the Seattle-Vancouver and Seattle-Portland runs. Photo by Guy Chartrand.

LETTERS

What might be termed NARP's "Chappaquiddick" of the "Mile-High Mishap" in Denver last October has evolved into an issue with all sorts of convolutions. The latest development is a resolution submitted by Region V Director Charles Dunn of Miami which would disqualify from membership on the NARP Board any NARP member in the employ of Amtrak.

It has been suggested to Dr. Dunn that he is treating the symptom instead of the disease. If a resolution is needed in this regard, rather than disenfranchise several active and effective Amtrak employees who serve on the NARP Board, simply revise the resolution to read: "That, in order to protect as confidential the voting record of Amtrak employees serving on the NARP Board, under no circumstances will the Board be compelled to vote on any issue in the presence of Amtrak officials and when appropriate, to further protect identity, the Board will be called into executive session with the vote taken by a written, unsigned ballot."

Touching briefly on two other points which correspondents have brought up in attempting to defend the controversial affair in Denver, a question was raised as to why I did not actively object at the time the vote was taken. As I mentioned previously the whole affair went off in rapid fire order with little time to ponder an alternate course of action. On the spur of the moment I decided that a motion to table would be the most appropriate move since it would take precedence over the original motion. What I thought would be a call for discussion of the motion and a proper time to move for tabling turned out to be a call for the vote without any discussion. After the hands went up I decided that more might be gained by using the incident as an example to avoid similar situations in the future and to illustrate the pressure politics that have been brought to bear affecting the Amtrak issue.

Finally, the thing that our politically inastute people cannot get thru their heads is that in Washington it is considered totally inappropriate and unacceptable ever to make a unilateral withdrawal from an issue once a party has aligned itself with a Congressional faction. If an issue is to be abandoned it is done quietly by direct contact with the Congressional office prior to making any public resolution or announcement. When this is done other parties in the alliance can make necessary adjustments in their positions without being taken by surprise and subjected to possible embarrassment. Many who are wise in the ways of Washington have shaken their heads over NARP's maverick disclaimer. Regardless of the content or intent of the resolution it was the very existence of the action that violated the commandments of Capitol Hill.

M. D. Monaghan, Director, NARP - Region IX
Garland, Texas

I don't want to beat a dead horse, but I would like to clarify some points:

1) NARP did not "approve" the eradication of the trains that Mr. Latham mentioned in his letter (last issue).

2) Anticipating a barrage of criticism, I wish to emphasize to RTN readers that I merely reported Tyler's explanation of "obscene sleeping car fares" (last issue). I did not (and do not) agree with the rationale.

3) I would be profoundly disturbed to learn that any Amtrak employee's career has been jeopardized because of his or her NARP activities. Preventing such abuses, and protesting them if and when they occur, must be one of NARP's functions as an Amtrak watchdog.

James C. Clark, Director, NARP - Region VII
Galena, Illinois

Even if Dr. M. D. Monaghan did write whimsical prose (last issue, p. 3), the fact remains that the thrust of his argument goes straight to the heart of the matter.

I, like the vast majority of NARP members, could not attend the board meeting in Denver last Oct 20. Since NARP's leadership considers it superfluous to report the proceedings of such meetings to the members, I have no other source of information than the reports of those who participated. But regardless of whether Dr. Monaghan's evaluation of the meeting is valid or not, he is entirely correct in condemning the board's action.

Even if NARP's leadership had agreed to cease active opposition to the Amtrak-induced discontinuances--an act which in itself is an outright betrayal of everything NARP has stood and fought for these past 15 years--there was absolutely no need to go on record with it. Except for Tony Haswell's tragic lampoon of a restructuring plan for Amtrak two years ago, I cannot think of a single event that has damaged the cause of rail passenger service advocacy more than this so despicable act on part of this "rump board" in Denver...

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $15.00 per year; single copy 65¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; James Feeney, New York; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

I have always felt that a consumer-oriented organization such as NARP cannot function effectively by hobnobbing with Amtrak management. NARP by its very nature finds itself in an adversary relationship with Amtrak and all entities opposing rail passenger service. If Amtrak were doing its job, there would be no need for an organization such as NARP. This is not to say that the relationship need be acrimonious, but it ought to remain cool and reserved. I can see inviting a senior Amtrak officer to address the audience of a general membership meeting, but to do so for a working session of the organization's ruling body is beyond my understanding. Would GM's board invite a UAW official to participate in their proceedings?...

In a way the action in Denver is not too surprising, tho! When organizations, as for example those in California and Michigan, take it upon themselves to advocate train discontinuances in other states while screaming for more service in their own, betraying the national organization follows almost naturally. I hope Dan Monaghan will have a few more vitriolic comments to make about these fellows!

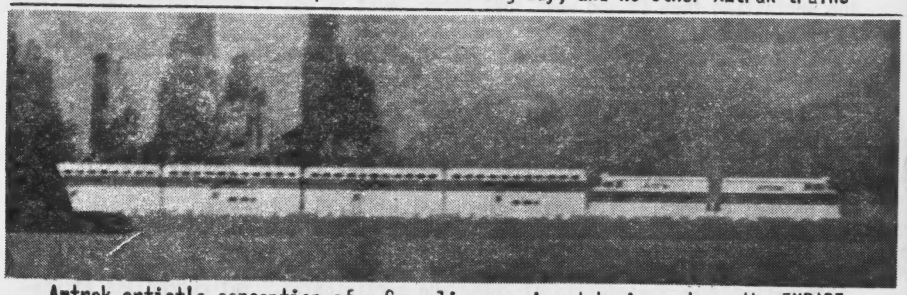
Alfred E. Ehm
San Antonio, Texas

SUPERLINER-EQUIPPED EMPIRE BUILDER DERAILS IN MONTANA

Amtrak train 7, the westbound EMPIRE BUILDER, derailed in a snowstorm at 4:20pm a quarter-mile west of East Glacier MT, a town at the edge of Glacier National Park, on March 14. Both engines and all eight Superliner cars left the track and at least part of the train slid down an embankment. The train was traveling at 35mph at the time of the derailment, which remained unexplained two weeks later. At least 90 people were treated or examined at hospitals for injuries, according to reports, and four people were said to be seriously injured. There were apparently 170 passengers and 19 crew members aboard the train.

Damage to the Superliner equipment and Amtrak engines was estimated at $500,000 or more, and the BN track received about $5000 worth of damage. The engineer could give no explanation for the wreck.

Injured passengers were taken to hospitals in Whitefish, Browning, Cut Bank and Great Falls. Two seriously injured passengers were taken by helicopter to a hospital in Kalispell. Other passengers were bused or flown on to their destinations. The track was reopened the following day, and no other Amtrak trains



Amtrak artist's conception of a Superliner-equipped train such as the EMPIRE BUILDER, running thru Southwestern scenery. This drawing appears on the cover of Amtrak's current Western tours booklet.

were delayed by the accident. Amtrak substituted Amfleet equipment for one one-way trip, that leaving Seattle the following Monday, March 17. That substitute train consisted of F40PH engine 219 and cars 21868, 21864, 20230 Amdinette, and HEP-converted sleeper 2996. After that run, Superliner cars were once more used on the train, from Amtrak's present fleet of at least 86.

Of the seven passenger cars and one baggage car that derailed, four overturned and three remained upright. The damaged cars were placed in storage at Havre MT. Reportedly, the diner and sleeper were not damaged. Some railroad employees said they felt that a broken ankle bar had caused the rails to separate, causing the accident. No official cause has as yet been determined, however.

CONGRESS WORKS ON FUNDING BILL FOR EMERGING CORRIDORS AND NEC

Congress has been working on a funding authorization for railroads which includes labor protection payments for the bankrupt Rock Island, more funds for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), and money for Amtrak's emerging corridors (see the emerging corridor report, last issue).

The House Commerce Committee in the last week of March approved a bill which authorizes funds for the above projects. Originally a Rock Island bailout bill, the legislation had NEC and other corridor funds attached to it by Congressman Florio. As it passed the committee, it included $750 million more for the NEC, $55 million to proceed on design and engineering work on the emerging corridors, $50 million to buy new equipment for those corridors, and it stated an intent to spend $850 million from the windfall oil profits tax for implementation of the corridor projects. (The windfall oil profits tax bill passed the Senate 66-31 on Mar 27 and was sent to President Carter to sign.) A Rock Island bailout bill has passed the Senate and must be reconciled in conference committee with the House bill just described.

Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin of Chula Vista CA added an amendment to the bill that would empower the Secretary of Transportation to order reluctant railroads to operate more trains within 60 days after Amtrak requested them. Althe Van Deerlin's amendment has far-reaching applications, it was apparently specifically aimed at forcing the Santa Fe to operate a seventh daily SAN DIEGAN, which it has refused to do. Van Deerlin also pointed to the fact that the requested overnight Sacramento-Southern California train has been held up for two years by the Southern Pacific. That railroad says it will fight the matter to the Supreme Court.

In the Senate, Senator Howard Cannon of Nevada reportedly wishes to strip out of the bill all reference to the emerging corridors, even at the loss of funds for the Los Angeles-Las Vegas corridor in his own state. There is a belief among some rail supporters that Congressman James Florio of New Jersey included the emerging corridors in the bill as a "sacrificial lamb" that could be cut out later to make the legislation more palatable. However, some Congresmen dispute this idea.

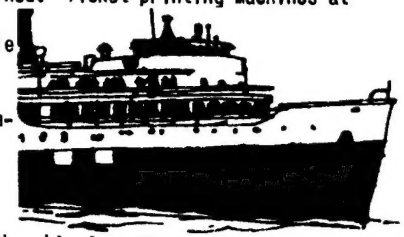
Within the California Congressional delegation, there was some conflict between Northern and Southern California. Rep. Robert Matsui of Sacramento led a move to successfully reject a Van Deerlin amendment that would have allowed Southern California to collect its corridor funds more quickly by letting Amtrak handle the funds without further Congressional involvement. But Matsui's action requires that recommendations on the corridors be submitted to Congress after feasibility studies are made. This will give Northern California an opportunity to compete more directly with respect to the Sacramento-San Jose route with Southern California's Los Angeles-San Diego corridor. State Transportation Director Adriana Gianturco sharply criticized Matsui's action, saying "By failing to recommend the immediate expenditure of construction money, the committee has effectively killed the future expansion of passenger rail services in California. The time for expansion is now, but the committee apparently wants to study the issue until actual expansion becomes highly unlikely, if not impossible." But Matsui saw it differently, claiming that Van Deerlin's amendment would have hurt Northern California and would have made it easier for President Carter to veto the bill in the present cost-cutting flurry in Washington.

Citizens for Rail California said that the best feature of the bill is the amendment to force railroads to run new services upon Amtrak's request, and that if that amendment were knocked out in conference committee, CRC would recommend a veto of the entire bill. Congressman Matsui has indicated that he would speak on the House floor to defeat the bill if the emerging corridor funds are removed.

Congressmen Matsui and Van Deerlin both acknowledged the "critical informational role" that NARP and Citizens for Rail California played in formulating this legislation.

RAIL CANADA

THE NEW RESERVIA reservation equipment for VIA Rail Canada came into use on Mar 1. The new ticket forms are longer than the VIA folder-envelopes that are used to hold them. Customers noticed few changes, but the speed of reservations is reported to be greatly speeded up. The practice of requiring people to rebook if they change foreseen departure times is sometimes enforced, causing some delays. The use of ticket punches has returned. Ticket printing machines at some points will speed operations.



THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE" Victoria-Seattle mini-cruise ship, as of this writing, will NOT be running this year. Altho a 42,000-name petition was presented to British Columbia premier Bill Bennett, he turned the ships's supporters down, calling the vessel "unsafe". Informed sources tell RTN that this charge is "absolutely false". It appears that the only reason for eliminating the ship from the popular tourist run is that the present political party in power dislikes the ship because the previous (NDP) party bought it from CP Rail to rescue it from oblivion. So heated is the issue that the president of the B.C. Steamship Corp. which operates the ship for the province, Arthur Elworthy, was fired for supporting use of the Princess. Critics say that the "Queen of Prince Rupert", planned to replace the Marguerite, is too small and too slow for the run; the trip would take 5½ hours compared to the 4¼ the Marguerite took. Since a substantial percentage of Victoria tourists arrive on the ship, a big money loss is foreseen for the city if a lesser vessel is used. The ship's supporters wish to thank RTN readers who have written from all over the U.S. in support, and to urge them to write now to the editor of the Victoria Times and the Daily Colonist, both at 2621 Douglas St., Victoria, B.C., Canada V8W 2N4.

THE READER'S DIGEST, Canadian Edition, for March contains an important article by Walter Stewart, "Is this any way to run a railroad?" (Stewart is author of "The Paper Juggernaut"--McLelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1979--about the Transport Ministry.) The article is sub-titled, "Let's stop sabotaging passenger train service and come up with a coherent national policy on trains." Some quotes: "...because of Transport Canada's shortsighted policies and the tendency of governments at all levels to favor road and air travel, rail service is being destroyed just when we need it most." And, "VIA's split policy of boosting rail travel yet shutting down services has driven a wedge of disillusion and mistrust between the Corporation and its natural allies, the pro-rail consumer groups. The most interesting is Transport 2000,... (which) has been surprisingly effective before the C.T.C...." Stewart suggests the following steps: (1) Stop passenger rail abandonments. (2) Instead of shifting railway stations out of cities, we should build multimodal stations for rail, bus and air. (3) We must examine the hidden subsidies to all forms of transport and put them on the same accounting basis. (4) More must be spent on rail research. (5) We must take a long-range view of transport as energy costs climb. For a copy of the magazine, send $1.25 plus postage to: Reader's Digest, 215 Av. Redfern, Montreal, P.Q. H3V 2V9, Canada.

VOYAGEUR BUS COMPANY has become the second inter-city bus operator to join Transport 2000 as an affiliate member (the other is the Saskatchewan Transport Commission.) Transport 2000 board members will meet in April with Mr. Paul Martin, President of Canada Steamship Lines, Voyageur's owner, and with Christena Sirsley, VP-Marketing for Voyageur. Conversations earlier with Mr. Martin have revealed that VIA's $4 minimum fare does not help bus companies at all. Local bus runs lose money, too, so rail is only trying to shift its deficit over to the bus operators. The latter are more concerned about long- and medium-distance runs, where express buses subsidize the rest.

MONTREAL'S LARGEST DAILY paper, La Presse, has run a full-page article by Guy Pinard, who rode the ADIRONDACK to New York and returned to Montreal on the MONTREALER. His article is titled (translated): "The growing popularity of Amtrak--a hard-to-explain phenomenon." Details included slow schedules, uncomfortable Amfleet coach seats, etc. Translation: "...Four major complaints: Over-long trip time; atrocious food, unworthy of an international train; poor comfort in coach class; incoherent reservation system." One passenger reportedly called Amfleet cars "Amscrap". Pinard also found fares too high. He concluded: "...at the risk of being accused of chauvinism, one may affirm that VIA Rail, in a few years, has done more than Amtrak in eight years to return its vigor to railway passenger transport."

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

THE SOUTH SHORE commuter line in Chicago has sent out specifications for new cars it wants to order, and only the Budd Co. in the U.S. is expected to bid on the contract. Bombardier and Hawker Siddeley in Canada are expected to bid.

WASHINGTON'S METRO SYSTEM is experiencing a shortage of cars, so trains are overcrowded and some cars are being cannibalized for parts. About 270,000 riders are currently using the transit system.

NEW COMMUTER TRAIN route between Milwaukee and Watertown has been proposed, and a consultant says the old Milwaukee Road line could be used, if rolling stock could be obtained with federal aid.

PORTLAND, OREGON AREA will turn in its environmental impact statement on the proposed Banfield Transitway (light rail) Project on Apr 1. Planning for the new transit line is running right on schedule, officials say.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMMUTE line out of San Francisco has seen a 32% ridership increase over the last two years because of the energy crisis and commuter discounts initiated by public transit officials.

PHOENIX COMMUTER TRAIN described last issue had its last runs Mar 7. The trains ran for about two weeks in the flooding emergency. 68% of 1547 passengers surveyed said they would use the service if it were continued. In the survey, there was also strong interest expressed in a passenger train between Phoenix and Tucson.

ROCK ISLAND COMMUTER service in Chicago is to be operated by the C&NW, Chicago's RTA decided Mar 20. Service continued on the routes uninterrupted despite the bankruptcy and dissolution of the Rock Island.

NEW YORK CITY transit workers threaten a strike Apr 1 unless a new contract is approved. A strike would disrupt commuting efforts of 5.4 million people.

ELEVATED SUBWAY TRAIN in The Bronx was hit from the rear by a Transit Authority work train late on Mar 27, injuring at least 20 passengers. The crash was on the No. 1 line at 230th Street and Broadway. Service was suspended.

MARYLAND'S STATE RAILROAD Administration late in March approved a contract for $3,429,090 to buy five rebuilt diesel locomotives from Morrison-Knudsen for use on commuter lines Baltimore-Washington and Brunswick-Washington.

ROME, ITALY'S SUBWAY line is now in operation. It is reported on in the New York Times (Mar 23). (continued on page 19)

RIDING THE READING TO READING

by Duane W. Roller

The Reading Railroad was never one of the country's major carriers: its total mileage of only 1286 and three-state operation prevented that. But once upon a time Reading provided many connections into Philadelphia from other lines: from the Lehigh Valley at Bethlehem, the New York Central at Williamsport, and the Pennsylvania at Harrisburg. Sleeping cars left Reading Terminal for Toronto and Chicago. But by the early 1960's interline operations were eliminated and the Reading became a fleet of RDC's venturing no more than 100 miles from Philadelphia. Astonishingly, however, the Reading service, now operated by SEPTA and in one case by NJDOT, has remained stable for 15 years.

Recently I rode Reading's longest route: the 94 miles from Philadelphia to Pottsville. This is SEPTA's longest route and it is unique in a number of ways: it has SEPTA's only engine-hauled trains, some of the few SEPTA trains which do not serve Philadelphia, and, because Conrail has retained the old Reading train numbers, the distinction of having Conrail train number 1 (as well as nos. 2 thru 11).

I left Reading Terminal on No. 3, the 10am departure for Reading, which consisted of RDC's 9164 and 9158, still in Reading markings. There were about 50 passengers on this weekday run. The first 17 miles are under wire to Norristown (Elm Street). This was the worst track on the run, thru the slums of North Philadelphia and beyond. Running speed was held to 35mph, and we lurched and swayed along the double-track line.

After leaving electrification at Norristown, we cross the Schuylkill River on a long viaduct and join the main freight line from Philadelphia. This line is 4-track and capable of 70mph operation, an unexpected pleasure.

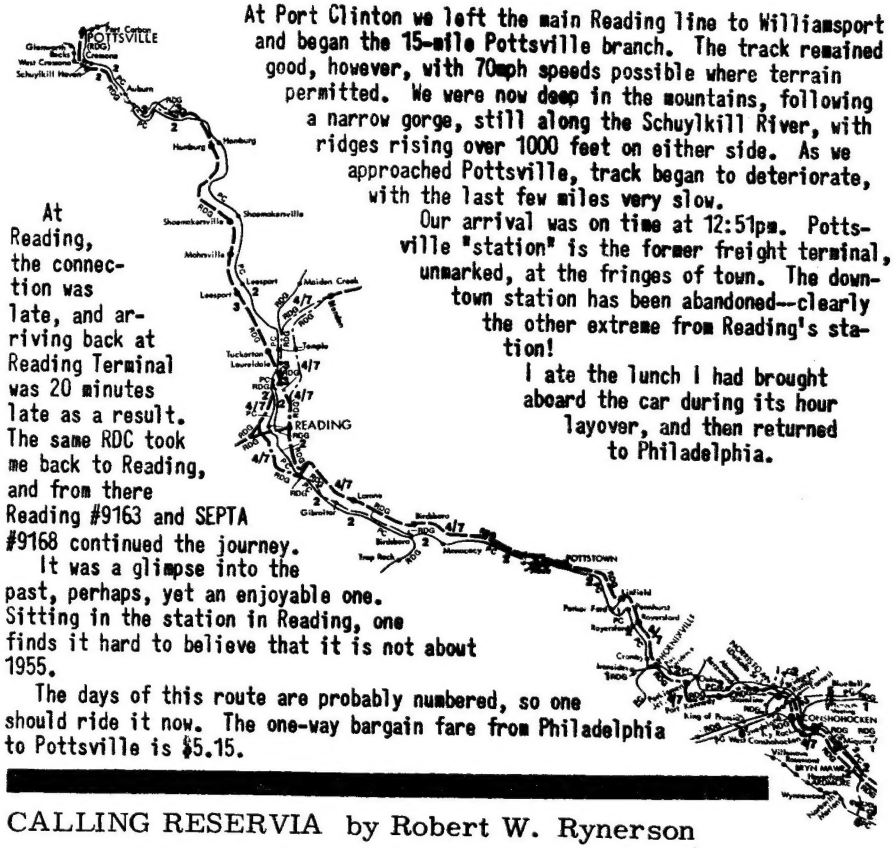
Valley Forge came and went, with the pleasant 18th-century house that was Washington's headquarters just a few yards from the track. We were still along the river and would be for some time. The track remained good all the way to Reading, altho the speeds lowered as we approached the mountains. Beyond Phoenixville was a long tunnel, and deep cuts and high cliffs along the ride provided scenery, altho finding a clear window amidst all the green Lexan was difficult.

Arrival at Reading was on time at 11:32am. The passenger load had remained constant at about 50, altho there was much business at various local stations. At Reading all trains except a pair of late-afternoon commuter runs terminate, with a single RDC shuttling between Reading and Pottsville.

The most pleasant aspect of the brief wait in Reading was its excellent station, perhaps one of the best-preserved of the medium-size stations which used to be common in the Northeast. Built in 1929 in Roman Basilica style, it had been beautifully restored as a Bicentennial project. The facade lettering had been regilded, proclaiming Reading Company in monumental characters. The bronze lion's head spouts had been polished. A massive wrought iron train bulletin board was in evidence. There was a ticket agent on duty, and an operating lunch counter. Clearly it is an unexpected and beautiful relic of former days, lovingly cared for by its city and patrons.

The single RDC (#9152) from Pottsville arrived at 11:54am, passengers changed, and it departed at 11:59am as Conrail 53 with about 20 passengers.

The line was now single track, in a totally rural, mountainous country, far from the city. There was a passenger or two at practically every stop, but clearly the business is not great, and there have been talks of abandonment. For now, however, it is a reminder of the once-common local RDC services that used to cover the Northeast. Memories of riding from Boston to Woods Hole on the New Haven, in a single RDC in the early 1950's, came back to me.



At Port Clinton we left the main Reading line to Williamsport and began the 15-mile Pottsville branch. The track remained good, however, with 70mph speeds possible where terrain permitted. We were now deep in the mountains, following a narrow gorge, still along the Schuylkill River, with ridges rising over 1000 feet on either side. As we approached Pottsville, track began to deteriorate, with the last few miles very slow.

Our arrival was on time at 12:51pm. Pottsville "station" is the former freight terminal, unmarked, at the fringes of town. The downtown station has been abandoned--clearly the other extreme from Reading's station!

I ate the lunch I had brought aboard the car during its hour layover, and then returned to Philadelphia.

At Reading, the connection was late, and arriving back at Reading Terminal was 20 minutes late as a result. The same RDC took me back to Reading, and from there Reading #9163 and SEPTA #9168 continued the journey.

It was a glimpse into the past, perhaps, yet an enjoyable one. Sitting in the station in Reading, one finds it hard to believe that it is not about 1955.

The days of this route are probably numbered, so one should ride it now. The one-way bargain fare from Philadelphia to Pottsville is $5.15.

CALLING RESERVIA by Robert W. Rynerson

VIA Rail Canada's computerized reservation system, using toll-free telephone access, went into operation on March 1. The service was launched with extensive newspaper advertising and some newspaper articles. From the customer side, the "Reservia" system appears similar to Amtrak's; the changeover will not be as noticeable to users, however, because VIA had been using CN's old partially-computerized setup.

Rumors of Amtrak-like busy signals and endless Muzak hold messages were circulating in the first days of operation. To test the system on March 11, I began dialing at 12:50pm (Mountain Time). The first three tries resulted in busy signals. The fourth netted a reorder signal, indicating that calls were overloading the telephone circuits somewhere between Edmonton and the reservation bureau in Winnipeg. To my amazement, on the fifth try my call went thru. Before the first recorded musical selection was finished, a reservation clerk was on the line.

I was quoted the correct fares to Calgary from Edmonton, and given the correct times. But when I asked where the Edmonton station was, she told me that "it's right downtown." When I suggested that this was not so, she checked and came up with the correct information, tho she was not quite sure where the South Edmonton station was in relation to the other station downtown.

Considering everything, I was impressed with this break-in period contact with Reservia. The fact that the station situation in Edmonton is confusing is not the fault of Reservia.

LABRADOR'S ONLY RAILWAY

by Duane W. Roller

One of the more unusual and remote passenger train experiences in North America is a ride on the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway, which extends 355 miles from Sept-Iles on the Quebec North Shore into the interior. Constructed in the early 1950's, this isolated railway was designed to tap the vast mineral resources of Labrador and Ungava. A line was struck due north from the St. Lawrence estuary at the magnificent harbor of Sept-Iles. It was so carefully constructed that the line is only 10% longer than the airline distance between its extremities, despite the need to climb 2000 feet from sea level onto the Ungava Plateau.

Recently I drove to Sept-Iles in order to catch a Friday morning departure of what the public timetable merely calls "the express train." Having had some experience with the lightly-patronized services of Northern Ontario and Quebec, I was astonished to find a train of 13 cars. The last two had recently been acquired from the Southern Railway and were still in Southern markings. The rest of the train was the QNS&L's standard ex-Canadian Pacific rolling stock in maroon and gold. In all there were two express cars, two baggage cars, a steam generator, and eight coaches, one of which had a snack bar.

Nearly 200 people boarded for the 8am departure. Most were people with business in the area. There is air service to the interior, but its $74 fare does not compare favorably with the railway's $21.50, and it is quite unreliable in bad weather.

Departure was at 8:11, and I was quite soon to learn that the scheduling--as the timetable itself indicates--is only approximate. At some intermediate stops we were over an hour early, and we were at least 20 minutes early at every one.

After slow travel thru the vast port facilities of Sept-Iles, welded rail and CTC were reached in about 20 minutes and we began moving at 50mph, the standard running speed for both passenger and freight trains. (On that account, the Federal Railroad Administration would probably consider the QNS&L an ideal railroad.)

Eleven miles from Sept-Iles, the precipice of the Laurentian Mountains was penetrated via the canyon of the Moisie River. For the next 90 miles came the most spectacular scenery of the trip, with tunnels, high viaducts, and waterfalls dropping down the sheer 2000-foot cliffs. The impression was of a half-size Yosemite Valley and sheer granite monoliths and cliffs rising up either side.

There was no question of passenger train priority on this railway: meets with southbound ore trains were common, and the passenger train took the sidetrack each time. Yet the dispatchers were so attentive that often we and the ore train hardly slowed. Each ore train was monotonously the same: two engines, 150 cars, two or three more engines, 50 to 100 cars, and the caboose. We met four during the day, as well as a way freight and a southbound passenger train.

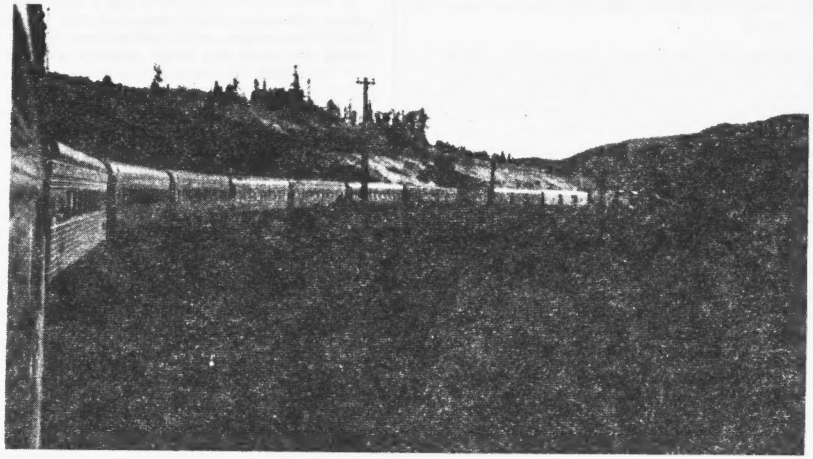
For the first hundred miles or so we dropped off occasional fishermen and campers, but these soon dwindled, and most of the business was between the end points.

Until recently, full dining service had been provided, but this had been discontinued, amidst much passenger grumbling, and a snack bar had taken its place, whose single attendant spent most of the day making sandwiches. Despite a load of 200 northbound and 400 southbound the next day, no shortages occurred.

The divide between the St. Lawrence and Labrador Sea watersheds was reached 150 miles from Sept-Iles at slightly over 2000 feet elevation, the highest point on the line. This was also the provincial boundary. The country became dull for the rest of the journey--a flat swamp plain with stunted trees. For the next 200 miles there was scarcely any change in the terrain, and the warm, sunny weather changed to cold and sleet.

Ross Bay junction, 224 miles from Sept-Iles, was reached at 12:22pm, 38 minutes ahead of schedule. There is no town--in fact, there were no signs of habitation except track gangs anywhere along the line; the country is far more remote than Northern Ontario. The junction is with the Northern Land Company Ltd. Railway, which runs 36 miles west to the twin towns of Labrador City and Wabush.

The NLCL connection, consisting of a single coach, had already arrived, and a handful of passengers transferred, since there is no thru car service between Labrador City and northern points. There is, however, thru service from Sept-Iles to Labrador City, so our train was switched here by the two road engines. The double-cut switching movement consumed only 18 minutes, with the two express cars and four coaches set out for Labrador City, leaving us with the two baggage cars, steam generator, three coaches, and the snack bar coach to continue on north.



The southbound Quebec North Shore and Labrador passenger train runs along in the canyon of the Moisie River. Photo by the author.

Covering the last hundred-odd miles, we continued across the plateau until reaching Knob Lake Junction, 353 miles from Sept-Iles. Here the main line continues north 2.1 miles to Silver, Labrador, the mines for which the QNS&L exists. The passenger train, however, was to continue 4.4 miles along mediocre track to Schefferville, Quebec, the mining town, which we reached at 7:52pm, 8 minutes early.

The opportunities of Schefferville, with its 2400 inhabitants, are not great, altho one of the locals took issue when I expressed such sentiments. The town is pleasantly situated between two lakes and is dominated by a large Hudson's Bay Company. The $37 minimum in the local hotel testifies to the remoteness of this part of the world. Since the twice-weekly schedule of the passenger train meant a one- or five-night layover, I chose the former and was back on the train (same equipment, same crew) at 8:00 the next morning.

The return was 2½ hours faster (downgrade) but the high weekend loads made us 33 minutes late into Sept-Iles. Altho it is difficult to feel isolated on a train with 400 passengers, I felt satisfaction at having penetrated one of the most remote areas of the continent.

AMTRAK BLOWS ITS OWN HORN: THE 1979 ANNUAL REPORT IS PUBLISHED

Below are excerpts from Amtrak's 1979 Annual Report, just out. The 32-page report is characterized by Amtrak President Alan Boyd as "not a traditional one." Says Boyd, "We have chosen instead to give you the reasons why we are excited about the future and why everyone associated with Amtrak should be optimistic and proud of what it is and where it is going."

WHERE WE CAME FROM

Amtrak's toughest and leanest years have ended. Our beginning was not auspicious. Some people thought we were created in 1971 to die soon thereafter. It seemed a safe bet. We were part of a system that had lost hundreds of millions of dollars each year. We began operation with old equipment. We had a lot of responsibility and almost no authority as we operated on other people's track with other people's employees and often at other people's convenience.

Amtrak lived on a year-to-year basis with Congress, never quite knowing just what route or other demands might be made, never quite knowing how much money would be appropriated.

Long-range planning was virtually impossible. Capital expenditures could not always be made wisely or as part of a plan. As a result, equipment purchased from year-to-year could hardly be designed with a coherent system in mind. Maintenance was a nightmare of variety.

We were left to run, work for, and maintain a patchwork system, which seemed almost beyond raising to levels of minimal efficiency.

Under those conditions, there was little to give anyone hope, either individually or corporately. Too many people just held on from one year to the next not knowing—critics said not caring—about the future of rail passenger service.

Employees—from stations to dining cars to distant offices, from maintenance shops to commissaries—shared the haunting vision of a precarious future.

But in eight tough years, the people of Amtrak, working together, have proved something as they have crossed the threshold into a new railroad age. They proved—with a little timely help from the energy crisis—that Amtrak is a vital part of a balanced American transportation system of the future—a future which begins now.

1979 . . . A SPECIAL AMTRAK YEAR

By almost any measure, 1979 was a watershed year for Amtrak. We carried more passengers than ever before—21.4 million people, up 2.5 million from the year before. Amtrak ran just shy of 5 billion passenger miles, up 22 percent from 1978. For the first time in its history, Amtrak carried more than 2 million passengers a month for the months of June, July, and August.

Revenues reached a record high of $381.3 million, up $34.2 million above the pre-fuel crisis estimate of $347.1 million. Cost control was so improved that it cost Amtrak only $4 million to earn these additional revenues. These excellent results permitted Amtrak to increase its revenue to cost ratio from 38.3 percent in fiscal year '78 to 41.5 percent in fiscal year '79.

Substantial new equipment went into service and many cars and locomotives were renovated and upgraded. The percentage of old, decrepit and unreliable equipment, while still far too high, did decline.

During 1979, we began to build new repair and maintenance facilities and renovate old ones so Amtrak employees worked in safer, more comfortable conditions. Equipment repair was better, quicker and easier. Passengers had a better chance of a pleasant ride.

Air conditioning failures, one of the major causes of en-route failures and passenger complaints, were cut nearly in half during our peak summer season of 1979. On-time departures from Chicago, which had been influenced largely by mechanical problems, steadily grew from a low of 42.1 percent to a high of 90.8 percent.

A total of 61 new or rehabilitated stations were completed in 1979, hopefully providing increased ease and comfort at the beginning and end of rail trips. In the Northeast Corridor, between Washington and Boston, using the most modern technology of concrete ties and continuous welded rails, Amtrak is making great progress in ensuring smoother rides over the busiest section of railroad in the country.

Late in 1979, Amtrak's corporate structure was reorganized and into that new structure came people from a variety of backgrounds. But they shared with those they joined a singular vision of an exciting future for Amtrak.

For Amtrak, 1979 was also the year when many more articulate allies in local and state government made clear to all who would listen that they needed Amtrak now and wanted it in their communities' future.

Those voices were heard in Congress and we gained a substantially improved relationship. That made things happen . . . first, a vastly improved financial arrangement and then a sustainable route network.

As the decade turned, people, money, equipment and enthusiasm flowed together, creating a vibrant Amtrak mood, an exciting anticipation of the decade to come.

Amtrak employees can be optimistic about a more secure future with a passenger-pleasing railroad, getting better each month, each year.

Amtrak can, for the first time, operate as a businesslike permanent corporation able to consider longer-range solutions to all its problems.

As it gave Amtrak the means, Congress also set standards and goals for a productive future. There was a clear standard set for both short and long-haul trains in terms of passenger miles with assurance that those routes would continue if they met the standard. "Use it or lose it" replaced more arbitrary measures.

In specific measures aimed at improving train performance and Amtrak's relationship with the operating railroads, Congress set two important goals. One was the attainment of a 55 mph average system-wide speed goal and the other was a 50 percent improvement in on-time performance. Congress further directed Amtrak to cut operating costs and improve revenues so that by 1985, revenues would represent 50 percent of operating expense. Already in 1979, we achieved a 3 percent improvement toward that goal.

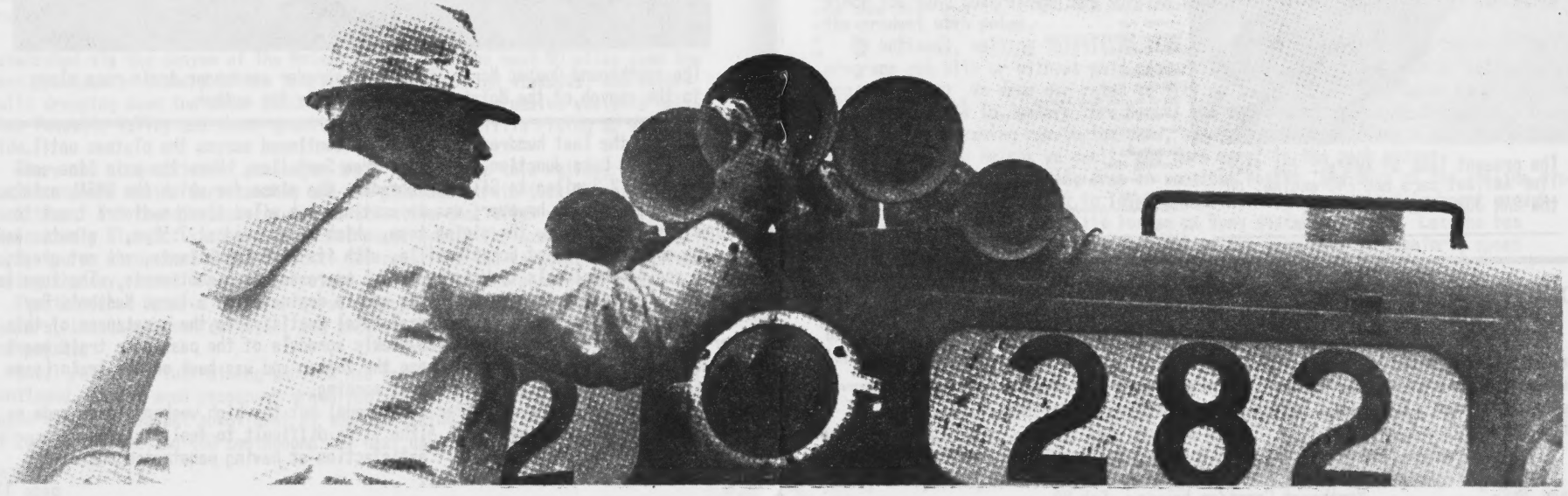
Congress in 1979 gave Amtrak more than simple guidelines and standards, as important as they are. It gave Amtrak a transfusion of hope and confidence.

A NEW ROUTE SYSTEM

Capital, budgets and goals have lent balance to Amtrak in a special way. But Congress also dealt with the complicated, emotional question of routes. In addition to the basic route system recommended by the Department of Transportation, Congress, responding to the energy crisis, gave the Amtrak Board of Directors the authority to make cost and ridership projections and to determine which additional routes should be added to the system. In so doing, they established general criteria based on average ridership and cost.

Amtrak was also given the flexibility to determine the level and quality of service, adding train frequencies where demand justified it.

The end result is a route system where some trains with high costs, low ridership and circuitous routings were dropped. Other trains, linking promising markets, were added.



For the first time in its difficult life, Amtrak has a chance now of prospering and growing from a secure base. Amtrak can claim its permanent and ever more crucial role in our national transportation system.

A NEW CHARTER FROM CONGRESS

During the last 35 years, other forms of transportation have made greater demands, had stronger advocates and thus received more help.

From the end of World War II to the end of 1978, federal obligations for highways reached $102.8 billion, for air $30.6 billion, for domestic waterways $13.3 billion, for mass transit another $13.3 billion, for ocean shipping $7.4 billion, and only $5.9 billion for rail of which only $2.5 billion went to Amtrak.

The result of that disparity in support was brought to the attention of Congress in April, 1979, by Alan S. Boyd, President of Amtrak:

"We cannot provide safe, modern, fast, convenient and reliable service—as directed by Congress—with locomotives built in the 1930s, passenger cars built in the 1940s and 1950s, trackage and roadbeds whose major characteristic is 'deferred maintenance,' stations which are falling apart, schedules which serve major markets less than daily or in the middle of the night . . . or both, routings which are circuitous, and a fleet which can never be responsive to peak demand."

The response of Congress to those hearings and to the obvious need for a totally modern American rail system at a time of energy crises was strong and clear. Congress provided Amtrak with financial continuity it had previously lacked . . . a two-year operating budget and a three-year capital commitment.

In a billion dollar commitment, the Administration made Amtrak's future bright as it guaranteed tomorrow's riders a modern fleet of comfortable cars and powerful locomotives.

President Carter said, "Trains have always been a truly American way to travel and I am determined to improve America's railway system. I want to demonstrate that trains represent the future and not the past in transportation in America."

The present look of Amtrak: the familiar Amfleet cars and F40 engine, on the SAN JOAQUIN. RTN photo.

	FY 1976	FY 1977	FY 1978	FY 1979
General				
System Route Miles ..... (In thousands)	26	26	26	27
Stations Served	495	524	543	571
Train Miles Operated ..... (In millions)	30.98	32.97	32.37	32.38
On-Time Performance				
Systemwide	74%	62%	62%	57%
Short-Distance	76%	66%	65%	61%
Long-Distance	69%	48%	52%	48%
Ridership				
Passengers ..... (In millions)	18.2	19.2	18.9	21.4
Passenger Miles ..... (In millions)	4,155	4,333	4,029	4,915
Revenue Cars				
Owned and Leased, 9/30	2,125	2,048	1,897	1,989
Operating fleet, 9/30	1,981	1,806	1,678	1,607
Out of Service, Daily Average	15.6%	17%	16.5%	16.9%
Back Shop, Daily Average	8.7%	7.3%	7.5%	8.1%
Total Average Out of Service	24.3%	24.3%	24.0%	25.0%
Average Age ..... (In years)	20.3	20.4	20.5	20.3
Heavy Repair	543	369	360	260
New Deliveries	324	53	0	50
Locomotive Units				
Operating Fleet	352	330	320	331
Out of Service, Daily Average	13.7%	19.5%	18.8%	25.3%
Average Age ..... (In years)	10.2	9.9	7.3	7.3
Number Rebuilt/Converted	27	26	38	22
New Deliveries	51	0	10	10
Turboliners				
Operating Fleet	11	13	13	13
Out of Service, Daily Average	8.3%	10.8%	11.2%	12.6%
Average Age ..... (In years)	0.9	1.7	2.7	3.7
New Deliveries	5	2	0	0
Metroliners				
Operating Fleet	61	61	61	58
Out of Service, Daily Average	27.6%	28.4%	*42.1%	*64.3%
Average Age ..... (In years)	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0
Heavy Repair/Upgraded	2	5	0	19

*Includes Metroliners undergoing upgrade program at Erie, Pennsylvania.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Last year the Secretary of Transportation recommended eliminating twelve trains. I supported him and I think most of the members of this committee did. But by the time the vested interests finished with it, we were only able to get rid of four. You have a better hope of getting rid of those other eight than the Northeast Corridor."

--Senator Russell Long to a National Taxpayers Union representative who had just testified before him at the Northeast Corridor hearing, Feb 29.

AIR AND RAIL FARES - COMPARING THE COSTS
by Bob Johnston

I have below made some cost comparisons between rail and air travel costs that I recently encountered when planning to travel between Chicago and Los Angeles in the first week of February. I wanted to take the train the whole distance, but due to time and cost constraints I decided to fly half-way. My 5-year-old son accompanied me.

ALL-RAIL (leaving Sunday) 1 adult & 1 child in a bedroom on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3 (plus five meals)	$358.50
ALL-AIR 7pm Adult Super Coach TWA	129.00
TWA Child. . . .	free
TWA TOTAL: . . .	129.00
COMBINATION Air to Albuquerque TWA Adult Super Saver* leaving Monday.	125.50
TWA Child. . . .	free
Bedroom on train 3 Albuquerque-L.A. family plan, leaving Monday.	171.00
Combination total (plus two meals).	296.50
ALL-AIR Super Coach, any airline except TWA	186.00
Child, any airline except TWA.	139.25
NON-TWA TOTAL:. .	325.25

*Super Saver requires a roundtrip, in my case from Salt Lake City after taking the COAST STARLIGHT, SF ZEPHYR and PIONEER L.A. to Salt Lake.

By flying to Albuquerque, I was able to get the reduced rate Super Saver back from Sale Lake City (where I had business a week later), so I saved about $130 by taking the train from Albuquerque instead of from Chicago.

Of course, I missed seeing Raton Pass, but that's not the point. The point is that for an adult and child traveling to Los Angeles, there is as much as a $229.50 (plus meals) premium for taking a sleeper over a 4-hour plane ride.

The example illustrates in my case that bedroom D in car 331 probably rolled empty from Chicago to Albuquerque during a slack time of year and Amtrak was out $187.50 in part because its competitors have more rate flexibility than it does, since too many Congressmen are worried about covering costs instead of marketing the product with price.

My business, selling television time, is very much like running trains. The programs run with or without paid commercials; the trains run with or without paying customers. We drop our rates to fill up the programs when fewer people want to advertise (as in January thru March) and raise them as demand increases. Our costs for programming remain the same, and unless someone finds a way to add hours to the day, like Amtrak we can't "add more cars" in the peak season.

You won't see kids flying free in vacation season, and many of the airline discounts will disappear. But in lower travel months, why can't Amtrak get enough price flexibility to reduce its losses on long distance travel? Let the bus companies scream--they are very marginal on the long haul for comfort, speed and convenience anyway.

In the TV spot business, anyone who would keep rates the same all year would be fired for incompetence. I hope the operational and political mechanics can be set up soon by Amtrak so that it can aggressively go after off-peak season long distance travel.

The first all-electrified BROADWAY LIMITED consist left Chicago Mar 17 with the following equipment: engines 300, 319 (to Wash.), 4935 (GG-1, Harrisbg-NY), power car 685 (Har-NY); cars 1209, 1232, 1613, 2890, 2080, 4710, 4711, 8506, Amdinette 20233, 4712, 4706, 2892. Last 4 cars plus #1209 went to Washington.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

OKLAHOMA TRAIN SERVICE will get preference from Amtrak, its Board of Directors decided at their monthly meeting on Mar 26. The Board voted a resolution that "recognizes the value" of passenger service between Oklahoma City and Newton KS, and states that the route "warrants preference" if one or both of the states involved applies to Amtrak to start service under 403-B. The Board directed Amtrak management to reserve funds for operation of the service if the states apply by Oct 1. Amtrak said it was the first time it had set aside funds for 403-B service that had not been formally sought, but, explained the rail corporation, a number of consumer groups and local governments have contacted Amtrak about the service. This would cover part of the route of the LONE STAR that was discontinued last October. Amtrak also said that "all discontinued services will get serious consideration in Amtrak's route and service level decisions." Amtrak said it has no money to start up the service without state assistance.....

BOARD OF DIRECTORS of Amtrak at their Mar 26 meeting did not elect a new Chairman. The matter was put off until the April meeting. The Chairman currently is Harry T. Edwards, and Charles Luna serves as Vice Chairman.....

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THE COAST STARLIGHT will be re-routed to run thru Sacramento CA, Amtrak said in a Mar 19 announcement. The date for the change is expected to be in the fall of 1981, after Superliner cars are placed on the train. The new equipment should allow faster running times to compensate for the somewhat slower routing. Northbound at Davis, the train would run thru Sacramento, Marysville and Chico instead of Orland, to reach a market of 1.2 million more people than at present. Amtrak has an option of running on the shorter Western Pacific tracks between Sacramento and Marysville, bypassing Roseville on the Southern Pacific line. Congressman Robert Matsui reportedly elicited the agreement to re-route from Amtrak after he threatened to attach an amendment to the emerging corridors bill that required Amtrak to make the change. $4 million will be needed from Congress in startup funds to make the change in routing.....

THE BROADWAY LIMITED got its first set of newly-electrified cars, with the first run being Mar 17 from Chicago (see consist on page 15). Early in April the other two sets are expected to be put in use. An Amdinette has been temporarily used on the Washington section of the train, but is to be replaced soon by a cafeteria-lounge car--half lounge and half cafeteria section, a rebuilt and electrified conventional car. Amtrak said the first trip with the cars went well.....

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THE "SUNTAN SPECIAL" route got a supporting vote by the Senate Transportation Committee in California. The Committee voted unanimously on Mar 18 to call for a feasibility study of initiating passenger service between San Jose and Santa Cruz CA. Sen. Alfred Alquist of San Jose sponsored the bill, which is opposed by Southern Pacific, Caltrans, and Santa Cruz County.....

THE UNION PACIFIC is interested in taking control of the Western Pacific, and on Mar 29 an inspection train was to run over the WP from Oakland CA to Salt Lake City, with an overnight stop in Oroville CA. The train was to carry top officials of both railroads. Arriving in Oakland the morning of Mar 27, the train was composed of "E" engines 960, 974-B, 968-B, and 928; and cars 5779 baggage, 202 "Pacific Domain", 1609 "Sun Ridge", "Wyoming", "Arden", 4810 diner, 9004 coach, business cars 110, 111, 112, 102, 103, and "Shoshone" (all UP equipment).....

THE KANSAS CITY Railroad Museum has offered Amtrak the use of some of its equipment to facilitate the startup of additional Kansas City-St. Louis train service. Amtrak has reportedly expressed willingness to put on a second train, but cites its equipment shortage. The cars offered by the museum include three coaches from the Kansas City Southern, Rock Island and Missouri Pacific; a KCS sleeper, and a KCS diner-lounge. The museum also has a Rock Island E6 engine if Amtrak is short of motive power. A bill to provide state funds to help finance the service has been under consideration in the Missouri legislature.....

MAGNER-O'HARA SCENIC Railway won a victory when the Grand Trunk Western's bid to have the railway's application for operation in Michigan dropped was disapproved by the ICC. The Scenic Railway still needs approval of the application for a certificate, however. The run is planned between Detroit and Traverse City over the Chessie, GTW and Michigan Interstate (see RTN #198, p. 17).....

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THE "LAKE TAHOE", former SP ferry on San Francisco Bay which made the last run when that service was discontinued is currently used for regular auto ferry service at Hood Canal in Washington State, where a bridge was recently wrecked in a heavy storm. The vessel, built in 1927, is now named the "Illahee", a word from the Chinook language, meaning "the place".....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN wants to buy the Snoqualmie Pass route from Milwaukee Road, Easton-Maple Valley WA and rebuild it. If accomplished, that route would become the route of the EMPIRE BUILDER. Incidentally, in an error in issue #200, on page 8 it was stated that the EMPIRE BUILDER used the Stevens Pass route; this should have been the Stampede Pass.....

THE AMTRAK CRESCENT was detoured for three days (Mar 19-21) over the SCL between Birmingham AL and Atlanta GA, the route formerly served by the SAL's SILVER COMET, due to a closing of the Southern mainline for a major track or bridge project for 10 hours each day. The detour added 30mins-1 hour to the running time. The time on the SCL was the same as on the Southern, but it took 25-30mins to switch from the SCL to SR in Atlanta. On Mar 20 a reader rode northbound from New Orleans to Charlotte NC. The train left Birmingham 1hr 45mins late at 3:40pm. Delays to that point included two red signals, a T&S gang near Edmundson MS, and a pedestrian walking into the train's path at Livingston AL. There, at 11:44am just south of the depot an adult woman was killed instantly when she stepped in front of the train. It was delayed 56 minutes by that accident.....

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INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION is asking Congress to be relieved of the task of preparing an annual report on Amtrak, since the ICC has already been relieved of its authority over the adequacy of Amtrak service.....

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY Board of the DOT is proposing that passenger train accidents be reported to it within two hours of their occurrence, rather than at the "earliest practical moment" as the regulations now require.....

NEW YORK STATE Dept. of Transportation is offering for sale a new four-sheet multicolor map of the state. The four sheets when joined together make a 9x7 foot wall map showing roads, railroads, airports, lakes of 6 or more acres, etc. Order forms for the maps are available from: Map Information Unit, NY State DOT, State Campus, Albany NY 12232; telephone 518-457-3555. The four are $2.50 each.....

JAPANESE BULLET TRAIN fares should be cut 50% to make the national railways the "people's JNR", argues the railway workers union. The union also called for making express trains available to commuter ticket purchasers. In other JNR news, a bullet train set a 304 kph speed record last Nov 28 in tests on a 43-km experimental line between Ishibashi and Washimiya. A 6-car bullet train with a more powerful engine than current ones have set the record.....

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA STATION has been nominated by the Alexandria Planning Department for inclusion in the state and national registers of historic buildings. It is one of few antique rail depots in the Washington DC area.....

PRESIDENT CARTER ANNOUNCED on nationwide TV on Mar 14 sharp federal budget cuts of almost $14 billion for fiscal 1981 to try to control inflation. There were not many specifics at the time about where the cuts would occur, except that the Defense Dept. would not be cut much. Later meetings with federal officials revealed that the Transportation Dept. budget will be cut by $1.075 billion. Planned cuts now include: $455 million in highways, $120 million in auto use management (carpools, exclusive bus lanes, etc.), $315 million in mass transit, $105 million in passenger rail, and $32 million in aeronautics. There would be other cuts for the Coast Guard and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (The $105 million cut from passenger rail exactly equals the amount being authorized by Congress for the emerging corridors.) Fiscal 1980 budgets will have to be cut in order to achieve reductions in the 1981 budget, officials said. For example, of $3.5 billion in highway funds to be obligated yet in fiscal 1980, $1.5 billion will have to be cut out. Fiscal 1980 ends next Sep 30.....

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THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT came just eight days after Secretary of Transportation Goldschmidt said he was seeking $17 billion more in capital and operating funds for public transit systems for fiscal years 1980-85, bringing the 6-year authorization up to almost $29 billion. But after the announced cuts, Goldschmidt defended them. He told reporters in San Francisco on Mar 20 that even tho the DOT's $1 billion supplemental appropriation would be cut, he would "protect" money for rail modernization and for replacement of buses. He said that "most proposals to expand Amtrak service will fare poorly. Instead, our efforts are to just get increased productivity out of the basic system".....

THE BN'S VOLCANO: The Burlington Northern owns part of an erupting volcano. The railroad claims the top square mile of Mt. St. Helens in southern Washington State, which mountain began erupting on Mar 27 for the first time since 1857. The 9671-foot volcano is about 30 miles east of the BN line used by the COAST STARLIGHT, almost due east of Kelso WA, and weather permitting, its activity should be clearly visible to STARLIGHT passengers.....

THE UNION PACIFIC and the Missouri Pacific have approved a merger agreement for the two railroads, and it must be okayed by the ICC and by stockholders. The UP is also making plans to acquire the Western Pacific.....

THE MILWAUKEE ROAD will get a revised bankruptcy reorganization plan on May 15. The BN has had approval of its bid to buy about 450 miles of its line.....

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175 TICKETRON OUTLETS in the Northeast Corridor are selling Amtrak tickets as of Mar 17, as a one-year pilot project. Only unreserved tickets for NE Corridor trains are being handled. Ticketron is a nationwide computerized ticket service for sporting events, theater, etc., With 940 locations nationwide, it sells 700,000 tickets weekly.....

NORTH WESTERN RAILROAD station in Chicago has been turned down for historic landmark status by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Committee.....

A FURTHER REPORT on the early March snowstorm on the East Coast by reader Robert Clark of Sanford FL who reports the following instances of lateness of the Florida trains there: Mar 1, train 87 late 6hr, 40min; Mar 2, train 81 2hr 30min; train 87 5hr 50min; Auto-Train 18hrs; Mar 3, train 81 7hrs; train 87 8hr 15min; Auto-Train apparently annulled; Mar 4, train 87 2hrs; Mar 5, train 87 4hrs.....

THOSE HEAVY RAINS in Southern California washed out a Santa Fe trestle between San Clemente and San Onofre, as reported earlier, on Feb 18. The first train of of the morning, train 781, was forced to return to San Diego. Southbound service resumed on Feb 22, with normal service running 50-60mins late. The first northbound SAN DIEGAN left San Diego at 1pm.....

THE CONNECTICUT DOT SPV-2000 railcars are now in the final stages of work at Budd's Philadelphia plant. They should be in operation about Apr 27.....

AMTRAK GUIDE DOG transportation policy was recently changed. The policy was expanded to permit the travel of a seeing eye or a hearing ear dog when accompanied by a trainer or person who isdelivering the dot to its owner/user.....

THE BROADWAY LIMITED is expected to begin an operational change on Apr 27, with the split of the two sections occurring in Philadelphia instead of Harrisburg, as noted last issue. How to do this is being decided now, and may be as follows: eastbound, the train would run thru to Philadelphia with F40 engines. From there the NY section would run north behind an electric loco (E60 or AEM7) with the cars running backwards. The Washington cars would run south on the rear of train 171. Northbound, the Washington cars would come up on train 142 to meet the southbound NY cars at Philadelphia. The two sections would then be joined and head west behind F40's. The NATIONAL LIMITED did the same operation there. Note that on the first all-electric run of the BROADWAY two F40 diesels brought the Washington section all the way in--an unusual occurrence there.....

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THE SAN DIEGAN preliminary February ridership figures were released this month: a total of 79,609 passengers rode, an increase of 30% over the 61,217 in Feb 1979. There were four days of service interruptions due to weather conditions. Without them, the increase would have been even greater.....

THE SAN JOAQUIN bargain $5 return trip coupons printed in newspapers along the route can be obtained until Mar 31 by mail. Write to: Amtrak Coupons, Dept. of Transportation, 1120 N Street, Sacramento CA 95814. Coupons are gold thru Apr 27..... A DETROIT-TOLEDO train may be running by this summer, Amtrak said, if the corporation can persuade local communities to lift speed restrictions on the line. Five towns have slow speed limits that would lengthen a normal one-hour trip to two hours. The train would make connections with the LAKE SHORE LIMITED in Toledo.....

OREGON RAIL ADVOCATES are convinced that additional service between Portland and Eugene in the Willamette Valley will be started by this summer. Two round trips a day are expected to be added along that portion of the COAST STARLIGHT route. The SP seems to be relatively cooperative in this case.....

IOWA'S PROPOSED RE-ROUTING of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR thru Des Moines on Rock Island tracks, bypassing Creston, Ottumwa and other towns, has received some sharp criticism from the places that would be bypassed, including the charge that the plan is really designed to aid the bankrupt Rock Island. Those who would like to involve themselves in this matter, and/or in the planning of a 403-B train Lincoln-Omaha, Nebraska, should contact the Iowa-Nebraska Association of RR Passengers, PO Box 3182, Omaha NE 68103; phone 402-341-6889.....

A STREETCAR SYSTEM for Highway 50 at South Lake Tahoe CA has been proposed (Mar 14) by the State Dept. of Transportation as part of a comprehensive transportation plan for that badly-congested tourist area.....

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC DEATHS increased in 1979, said the DOT, despite a small drop in the amount of driving done in the U.S. The total was an estimated 50,745--up .8% from the 50,327 of 1978. The increasing use of smaller, lighter-weight cars seems to be a contributing factor to the climbing death rate.....

THE GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA station observes its 50th birthday with a ceremony on Mar 29. Mar 21 was the tenth anniversary of discontinuance of the CAL. ZEPHYR.....

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT (continued from page 7)

PHILADELPHIA WILL BUY 125 cars from the Japanese firm of Nissho-Awai, city officials announced Mar 11, for use on the Broad Street Subway. The city wanted to give the contract to Budd, the high bidder, to stimulate the local economy, but legally could not. The Japanese company was low bidder.

BOSTON'S MBTA SYSTEM is makign a 90-day trial run of Toronto's new CLRV streetcars. First public use of them in Boston was in late February. They are to run on the Long Branch, Bathurst line, and St. Clair Avenue. The cars are manufactured by Hawker-Siddeley in Canada. Toronto had problems with the cars in snow.

THE SEMTA BOARD in Michigan is proposing a Detroit-Port Huron commuter line . The route would cost $1.5 billion, including subway work.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

JANUARY 1980 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE OVER 1979

Metroliners	135,029	-12.8
NE Corr Conventional	381,075	-7.5
New Haven-Springfld	24,215	-11.7
NY-Philadelphia	205,593	1.2
Phila-Harrisburg	89,122	9.1
NY-Harrisburg	20,229	4.2
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	855,363	-4.8
NY-Niagara Falls	53,911	-6.2
Chicago-St. Louis	7,827	-8.8
Chicago-Milwaukee	22,801	12.9
Chicago-Detroit	32,929	-6.2
Chicago-Carbondale	12,292	- .4
Chicago-Quincy	6,800	7.1
L.A.-San Diego	82,410	41.0
Portland-Vancouver	9,462	4.8
Washington-Cincinnati	12,109	123.7
Wash.-Martinsburg	23,062	1.9
Oakland-Bakersfield	4,453	.2
New York-Montreal	9,635	6.4
Chicago-Port Huron	7,448	10.1
Chicago-Dubuque	3,202	-15.6
Chicago-Duluth	7,549	-7.5
Chicago-Valparaiso	18,323	--
Chicago-Kansas City	8,123	9.1
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	322,336	17.1

Amtrak

Washington-Montreal	28,765	-4.0
New York-Florida	54,846	-6.3
Chicago-NY/Washington	18,569	31.9
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	8,667	13.4
Chicago-Seattle	17,424	40.8
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	38,275	91.9
Chicago-Los Angeles	22,046	18.2
Chicago-New Orleans	15,105	-16.0
Chicago-Texas	14,616	20.9
L.A.-New Orleans	6,752	-10.7
L.A.-Seattle	37,209	10.9
Chicago-NY/Boston	21,529	20.1
Boston-Newport News	49,398	-4.8
New York-Savannah	29,536	-1.6
Seattle-Salt Lake	13,623	8.8
New York-New Orleans	16,225	--
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	392,585	13.9
Special trains	6,680	53.6
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,576,964	.1

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

Amtrak released the above January ridership figures on Mar 20. The December figures appeared in issue no. 200. The uninspiring .1% increase systemwide, compared with Jan 1979, was in large part due to the discontinuance of five routes last October. Those five routes accounted for 52,812 riders in Jan 1979, and if they are eliminated from the comparison month, the 1980 increase comes to 3.6% on the routes remaining. A 4.8% ridership drop in the Northeast Corridor comes to a loss of 41,057 riders, but some of these are included in the data for Boston-Newport News, New York-Savannah, and Washington-Montreal routes. However, those three routes also showed drops in January. Short distance and long distance routes were up substantially, accounting for 55,119 and 54,569 new riders. Los Angeles-San Diego accounted for the biggest hunk of these--23,968 new riders. Amtrak's Marketing Dept. is still following the peculiar practice of including SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and DESERT WIND riders in a single total.

RAIL FANTRIPS

May 31-Jun 1: "Potatoland Special" on B&A RR in Maine, 1st coach excursion since 1961. Over 400 mis, BL-2 diesel, open-window cars, runbys, overnight in Presque Isle. $80 before 5/8. 470 RR Club, Box 2468, So. Portland ME 04106. 207-799-5955

Apr 19: Trip over entire Mercersburg RR in gondola car (hardy adults only), $15. Lv Lemasters PA 11am, back at 4:30; 27-mi RT. Bus avail. from Capital Beltway, Silver Spr or Rockville. G.W. Schafer III, 9272 Canterbury Riding, Laurel MD 20810

May 18: "Mississippi Zephyr" Chicago-Dubuque. See ad on page 23.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. To be sure of entry in time, have it in to us at least 4 weeks before event. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Kansas City Mar 22: engines 516, 527, 518 (SDP's); cars 1232, 1002, 1247, 9995, 9936, 9944, 9933, 3313, 8068, 2256 "Star View", 2755 "Palm Lore", 2700 "Lake Wales", (deadheads to La Junta:) 10605, 21091.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 41, Harrisburg Mar 20: engines 4904, 4924 (NY section), 4926 (Wash. section) (GG-1's, off at Hbg; 431, 474, 437 (E's, on at Hbg); cars 1211, 1002 "Silver Bear", 2718 "Pine Dawn", 2698, 5648, 5656, 3302, 8805-8806, 8323 (as lounge), 5630, 4856, 2650 "Silver Point", "Rivanna River" (ex-SR).

*SHENANDOAH, train 33, Silver Spring MD Mar 4: engine 268 (F40); cars 2932 "Pacific Waters", 20032 Amcafe, 21810, 21102, 21141.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, New York Mar 8: engines 491, 488; cars 4626 deadhead, 1611, 2887, 8504, Amcafe 20048, 4614, 4607, 4700, 4701.

4 Illegal Trains include the Desert Wind

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*SILVER METEOR, train 87, New York Mar 5: engines 4930, 4928 (GG-1's); cars 1005, 1412, 2695, 2851 (ex-SR), 2033 "Loch Arkaig", 8023, 4418, 4459, 4458, 4432, 3301, 4466, 4590, 4446, 8004, 3206 "Rapid Stream", 2852 (ex-SR).

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, VIA train 4, Edmonton Feb 21: engines 6501 (A), 6610 (B); cars 9672 bag, Dayniter 5597, coach 5597, dome lounge "Athabasca", diner 1361, slprs "Laird Manor" (CP), "Edmundston", "Stuart Manor".

*BLACK HAWK, train 370, Galena IL Feb 22: engine 327 (F40); cars 4704 (HEP-converted coach), Amcafe 20031.

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 22, Dallas Mar 9: engines 319, 284 (F40's); cars 1223, 21208, 20029, 21886, 21834, 21881, 20225, 2941 "Pacific Waters".

EXPRESS ADS

The Annual General Meeting of Transport 2000 Canada will take place at the Richelieu Inn, 430 Ouellette Ave., Windsor, Ontario on Sun., Oct 12 1980, 1:30pm.

Railroadiana Auction Sat. May 3 sponsored by Pottstown NRHS at Old St. Lukes Church, behind the Post Office Gilbertsville PA. 400 lots of collectibles. Lanterns, Builder Plates, Timetables, and much more. For info write: Ted Maurer, 1930 N. Charlotte St., Pottstown PA 19464. Inspection at 9am, sale at 11am.

TROLLEY FANS: Read "Trolley Trails Through the West". Volumes 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane/Bellingham, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-Western Canada $3.00 ea. NEW: Volume 7 - Northern California $4.00. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Brothers Publications, Box 712rtn, Yakima WA 98907.

VISITING PHILADELPHIA? First read "Delaware Valley Rails", the complete railroad and rail transit guide to the region's 15 counties. 192 pages of facts, rosters, maps, and photos. Flyer available. $9 (Pennsylvanians add 54¢ tax); $10 outside U.S. Order from: John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove PA 19090.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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TRAINS!!! We know them!!! We ride them!!! We sell train tickets!!!
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DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

TRAIN THROUGH MEXICO lets you see Mexico's "back-country" the economical, relaxing, exciting way--by train and save 35%. Write R.T. Peck, Drawer 72, Whittier CA 90608.

TIMETABLES: NEW VIA Rail system folder Feb 3-Apr 26 1980; also never-issued fall 1979 VIA folder. $1 for handling and postage to: TRANSPORT 2000, Box 300, Term. A, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1N 8V3.

TRAVEL ON CANADIAN TRAINS this year. They are clean, convenient and relatively economical. Your dollar buys $1.15 Canadian. To reserve call: Boston, 617-426-7974; Buffalo, 716-856-2940; Chicago, 312-346-6222; Detroit, 313-963-6037; New York, 212-586-6066.

TRANS-ACTION: Quarterly rail and transit journal, $10 per year. NARP members $5. Box 300, Term. A, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1N 8V3.

AMTRAK TRAVELERS - Reserve NOW for summer travel. Avoid disappointments of early sellouts due to gas prices and fare increases. Reserve with the Rail Specialists --where rail is our only business.
Let's Travel Tours, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 787-8350.

Western Railroadiana Collectors' Faire, sponsored by National Association of Timetable Collectors. Saturday, May 3, 1980, Holiday Inn North, 1900 Canterbury Rd., at Freeway 160, Sacramento, CA. Hours 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Tables available: Members $10.00. Non-Members $20.00. Admission $1.00. Contact Roy Gabriel, Box 981, Sacramento, CA 95805.

THE MISSISSIPPI ZEPHYR is coming soon! The Twentieth Century Railroad Club's tribute to America's disappearing domes will operate one time only, Sunday, May 18. Don's miss what may be the last chance to experience Vista-Dome viewing from a midwest domeliner. Operates Chicago-Dubuque, Iowa (with a stop in historic Galena) over ICG trackage. Special train leaves Chicago 10 a.m. and returns about 9 p.m. Consist to include Vista-Dome Coaches, E-Units, and a lounge car (all subject to availability). Photo stops. RailFair 80 also includes the Ninth Annual Chicago Railfan Luncheon and an evening of railroad video entertainment by After Image, Ltd., Saturday May 17. Details on all this and more from Unirail, Department N, P.O. Box A-3258, Chicago, IL 60690. Enclose SASE.

DON'T DIAL AMTRAK! Dial (415) 326-7330 for your reservations and avoid busy signals and "holds"! Low fares for families, handicapped travelers, senior citizens. We sell Britrail and Eurail passes. Call "The Railfans" at Accent on Travel, 1030 Curtis St., Menlo Park, California 94025. (415) 326-7330.

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The Twentieth Century Railroad Club pays tribute to the rapidly disappearing dome car with this special train of dome and classic flat top equipment. Train departs Chicago 10 a.m. for a mid-afternoon arrival in Dubuque (passengers may also debark in historic Galena.) A delicious buffet dinner will be available at the Magnificent Julian Hotel in Dubuque — but only to those who order the Sunday Dinner with their tickets. Return to Chicago about 9p.m.

The Mississippi Zephyr is a part of Railfair 80, which includes the Ninth Annual Chicago Railfan Luncheon at the Chicago Union League Club. Featured will be speakers of note in the railroad industry, and an evening of railroad video entertainment, all on Saturday, May 17.

FARES

Round Trip Chicago/Dubuque or Galena	$ 65.00
Sunday Dinner in Dubuque (must be ordered now)	7.50
Ninth Annual Chicago Railfan Luncheon	11.00
if available, at the door	12.50

Tickets for Saturday evening's railroad video program will be sold at the door □

To order tickets, or request further information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: RICHARD A. BROOKS / 8100 S. RHODES AVE. / CHICAGO IL, 60619
TICKET MANAGER

Complete scheduling and other information will be mailed to you with your tickets. All orders received after May 7 will be held for pick-up on the day of event. Although sales cut-off dates have not yet been established, tickets for some events may not be sold after May 10. No refunds issued unless event is cancelled. Equipment is subject to availability and substitutions. RAILFAIR 80